

The background features a light-colored wooden surface. In the top-left and bottom-left corners, there are clusters of dried, brown leaves on thin stems. In the bottom-right corner, a portion of a grey textured notebook is visible, with a gold-colored pen resting on it. A large, semi-transparent, light beige rectangular area is centered on the page, containing the main text.

WORKBOOK

.....

Managing Change

3 Essential Tools To Navigate Change

WWW.ANACOACHING.COM

**CREATIVE
UPRISING**



01

Change is the only constant in life, yet it often brings a wave of uncertainty and discomfort. In this e-book, we embark on a journey of self-discovery and growth, exploring the intricate process of managing change. Drawing inspiration from Lewis Carroll's whimsical words in "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland," we delve into the essence of transition and uncover essential tools to navigate its twists and turns.

"Who are you?" said the Caterpillar.... "I-I hardly know, Sir, just at present." Alice replied rather shyly, "at least I know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have changed several times since then."

Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Acknowledging Change

Time and time again, I observe clients bringing changes into coaching. These changes may be ones they wish to make or those that have occurred in their lives. Change often manifests at a surface level—getting a new job, becoming a parent, moving in with a partner, experiencing loss, starting a new business, leading a creative project, relocating to a new country, or reaching a milestone age like 30, 40, 50, or 60, triggering a profound realization. What people seek from me is a solution to alleviate the discomfort of the changes they experience.

H.L. Menck aptly stated, "Every complex problem has a solution which is simple, direct, plausible—and wrong." Change is undeniably one of the most significant and intricate challenges we face. If you came to this workshop expecting to receive seven secrets to master change by lunchtime and never experience pain again, I must redirect you. Change does not adhere to such simplistic solutions. Transition is an ongoing process, a constant facet of life, not a conquest to be completed and set aside. Adopting a high-achieving, highly productive mindset may not serve you well in managing changes.

As a high performer with a penchant for impatience, I learned this lesson the hard way while working as a senior leader managing change in organizations. I had to recognize that managing change involves understanding and addressing individuals' unique reactions to change. Change is a constant, unsettling, and messy business that cannot be resolved with a single solution.

The reality is that we must learn to manage the internal aspects of change rather than focusing solely on external manifestations. Change occurs externally, but internally, it initiates a transition—a crucial element for evolution and growth. The first takeaway is understanding the distinction between change and transition.

Transitions are inevitable and often induce anxiety and stress, even when initiated by us. The brain typically resists change as it feels unfamiliar, prompting individuals to navigate through transition stages and the accompanying array of emotions. Even seemingly insignificant changes can evoke ambivalence, leading individuals to question their feelings. It is within the navigation of these emotions that we encounter the core of our identity, as every change brings forth a new identity, making the process of unraveling the self both existential and practical.

Let's begin by focusing on a particular change that you wish to explore. I encourage you to select one change that is currently occurring or has recently taken place in your life. By delving into the internal transition that occurred, we can apply our methodology, enabling you to utilize these tools for any future changes you may encounter.

What change are you currently experiencing? Or choose a recent change you've encountered, or a change you aspire to make? It's a challenging question for many, but an essential one to consider.

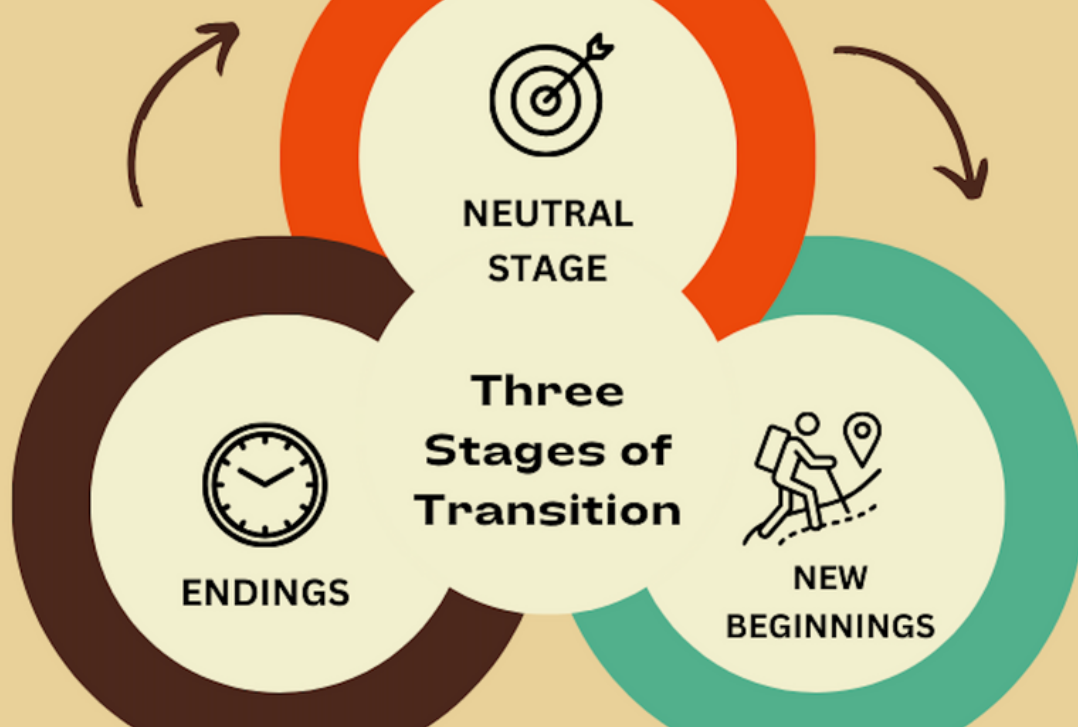


What we call the beginning is often the end And to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from. —T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding"

I have had the privilege of working with thousands of creatives and leaders, and when it comes to navigating change in their lives or managing a team, the number one challenge is often facing resistance and managing the emotions that inevitably accompany change. The sobering news is that 90% of us tend to avoid change. However, the encouraging news is that the remaining 10%, who cope well with change, tend to make better progress because they feel more resilient to take risks. And by being here, engaging in this workbook and learning to cope with change, you are already demonstrating that resilience.

One emotion that people frequently find challenging to identify and navigate, yet is universally experienced during change, is grief. Grief is a natural response, but it often goes unrecognized or unacknowledged because it is commonly associated with death, a topic still considered taboo in Western society. However, grief can arise in response to any significant change, not just the loss of a loved one. In coaching sessions, grief often emerges, and there is often reluctance to address it directly. Even therapists may find grief challenging to handle and may prefer to refer clients elsewhere. Yet, what grief truly requires is acceptance and acknowledgment—a welcoming embrace that allows individuals to sit with their emotions, let them run their course, and eventually move forward. Change cannot occur without some degree of grief, even in the case of ostensibly positive changes.

(



Stages of Transition

Now, let's delve into the three stages of any change, using a psychological model to build awareness and understanding. As I introduce these stages of transition, I encourage you to reflect on which stage you currently find yourself in. Perhaps you are experiencing the first stage, known as "**Endings**," where you are in the process of letting go of something familiar—a situation or relationship that is changing, ending, or evolving.

Alternatively, you might find yourself in a **neutral stage**, which is often overlooked but crucial. In this stage, you are neither fully in the past nor fully in the future, feeling somewhat adrift and uncertain about where you are headed. Despite its often-dismissed nature, this neutral stage holds significant potential for growth and introspection.

Finally, there is the third stage, "**New Beginnings**," which can be enticing and filled with excitement for what lies ahead. However, this stage is far less mechanistic than we might prefer. In our culture, we are accustomed to things starting with a simple switch or key, but the process of new beginnings is often more complex and nuanced than that.



Endings

CONSIDERING that we encounter endings throughout our lives, it's common for many of us to handle them poorly. This is often due to a misunderstanding of their significance—we either take them too seriously or not seriously enough. On one hand, we tend to catastrophize endings, viewing them as final, irrevocable conclusions. On the other hand, we may downplay their importance out of fear or discomfort, avoiding the necessary process of closure.

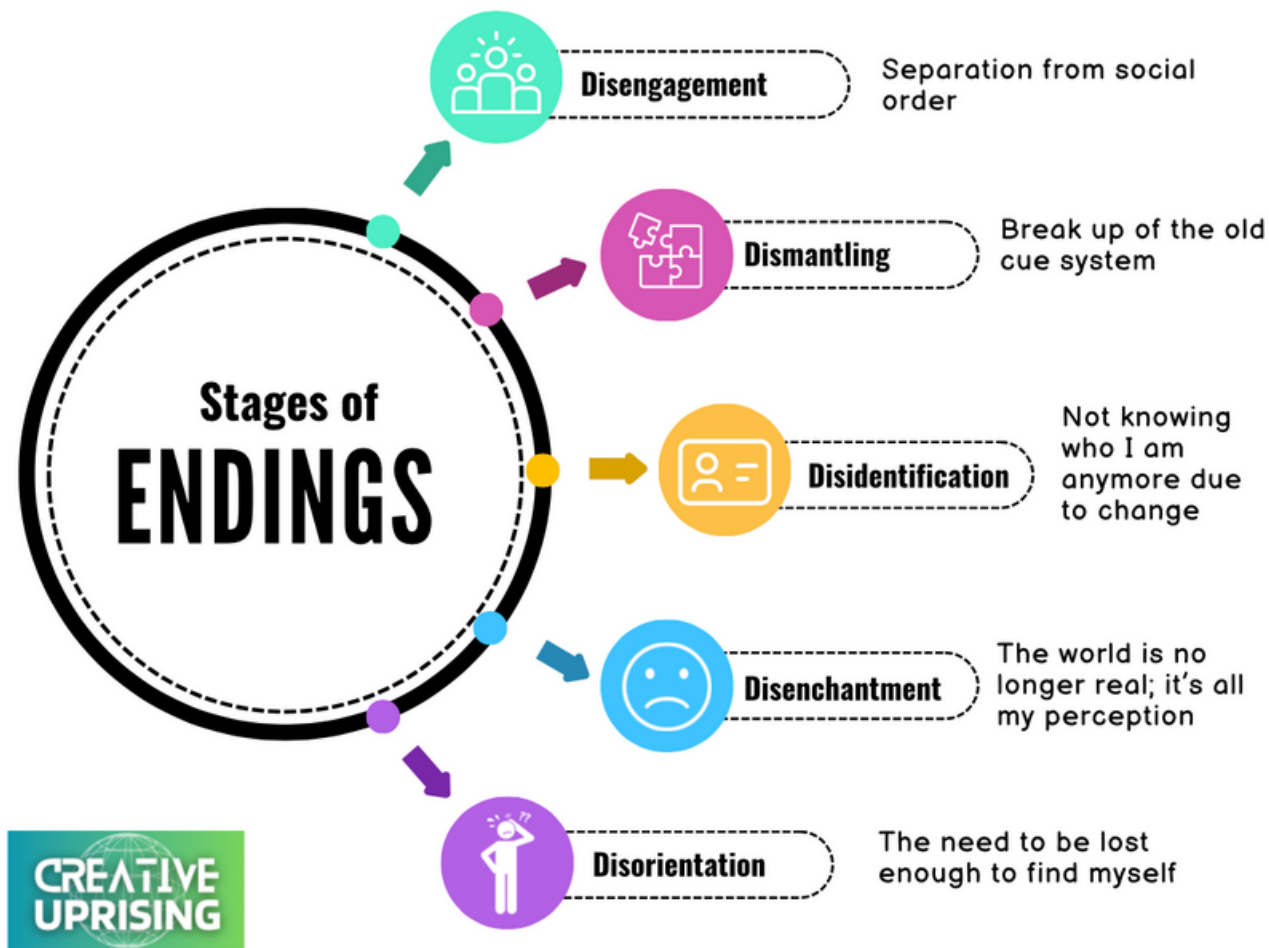
Here's a Zen story to illustrate this point: Two monks were journeying through the countryside when they encountered a muddy stream blocking their path. A woman in a beautiful robe stood nearby, unable to cross. Without hesitation, one of the monks offered to carry her across the water, which he did without a second thought. They continued their journey in silence. Later that evening, the other monk broke the silence, expressing his disapproval of his friend's actions. Monks, after all, were not supposed to have any interaction with women. The monk who had carried the woman responded calmly, "I only carried her across the water. But you're still carrying her in your thoughts." This story serves as a reminder that we often hold onto past experiences long after they're gone. It urges us to let go of our burdens and move forward with clarity and peace of mind.

Endings serve as a necessary clearing process for new growth to take root. When we're faced with an ending, it's essential to ask ourselves: **What am I clearing? What do I need to let go of? Which habits, attitudes, and outlooks are no longer serving me?**

It's crucial to acknowledge that letting go is not a passive act but an active process of introspection. Instead of avoiding or dismissing endings, we should embrace them as opportunities for self-discovery and growth. By understanding the patterns of our past, we can better navigate the uncertainties of the future.

In coaching, many individuals come with aspirations for new beginnings without fully addressing what they need to leave behind. Just as one cannot build a new structure on a foundation still cluttered with debris, we must make space for the new by releasing the old.

While society often encourages us to swiftly move on from endings, it's essential to honor the process of letting go. Rather than looking away, we must look inward, confronting our emotions and experiences with courage and compassion. Only then can we truly embrace the transformative power of change.



Stages of endings

Endings often commence with disengagement. In moments of inner transition, people find themselves separated from familiar places in the social order. This step of disengagement is a recurring theme in ancient tales—for instance, Christ embarks on a forty-day journey into the wilderness, while Oedipus flees his home to evade his fate.

Whether willingly or unwillingly, we experience disengagement from activities, relationships, settings, and roles that once defined us. Divorces, deaths, job changes, relocations, and illnesses disrupt the contexts in which we recognize ourselves, dismantling the old cue system. While the act of disengagement may occur abruptly, the process of dismantling the habits, behaviors, and practices that shaped our identity is gradual and meticulous.

This dismantling leads to disidentification—the unsettling process of losing sight of who we truly are. It can be disorienting to navigate questions about our identity, especially when confronted with the need to provide a simple label for what we do. We crave a clear, singular identity, yet find ourselves juggling various roles and responsibilities.

Disenchantment follows—a realization that our once-held beliefs about the world may no longer hold true. Discovering that cherished notions like Santa Claus or the infallibility of loved ones are not as we perceived can evoke feelings of anger and depression. This disillusionment with the world as we knew it can be challenging to accept.

Disorientation ensues, as expressed in Robert Frost's words: "Lost enough to find yourself." Embracing a sense of being lost can lead to profound self-discovery if we can set aside our panic and relinquish reliance on maps, goals, and old motivations.



Reflect on a past change you've experienced and consider what you had to let go of during that transition.



Identify areas in your life where you could surrender more fully, accepting and releasing what no longer serves you.

Channel this newfound energy into cultivating trust in your evolving self.



Recognize positive aspects of your old self and allow them to resurface.

Embrace the flow of energy without effort, welcoming gifts from your old self as you navigate the journey of change and growth.



Neutral Stage

And now we find ourselves in the second stage—Neutrality:

Embracing ambiguity in this phase can be challenging. We often prefer clarity and certainty, akin to holding our breath underwater. Yet, just as holding our breath can lead to exploration and discovery, sitting with the unknown in the neutral zone can lead to deeper insights and better choices in life. Here, we confront the fundamental question: What do I want? And beyond that, what do I truly desire? Expanding our tolerance for uncertainty allows us to linger in this space more comfortably, facilitating wiser decisions.

In times of crisis, such as the pandemic, there's a collective longing for a return to "normality." But what exactly constitutes normality? It's a social construct, subject to interpretation and change. For creatives, challenging the status quo is inherent to their role. Yet, to effectively challenge norms, one must be willing to dwell in the unknown and question established truths.

The notion of a stable, predictable world is a fantasy we must release. Uncertainty is the only certainty we can count on.

Embrace the need for this time in the neutral zone:

- **Allocate regular time and space for solitude, allowing for introspection.**
- **Keep a journal of experiences, capturing moods, decisions, hesitations, and thoughts.**
- **Consider writing an autobiography to gain deeper insights into your desires and aspirations.**
- **Utilize this period to uncover what truly matters to you and what you genuinely want in life.**



New Beginnings

So, let's transition to the stage of New Beginnings. This is often the phase where everyone's attention peaks, eagerly seeking a roadmap for a successful start. Reflect on your own experiences of new beginnings—they're often unceremonious.

Consider those moments of unexpected greatness, like bumping into an old friend who helps you land a job or meeting your future spouse at a party you almost skipped. Life is replete with such instances, right? You might have stumbled upon a life-changing book simply because it was the only one lying on your friend's coffee table during an impromptu visit—and later, you were astounded to find it profoundly impactful, despite initially dismissing it as dull and confusing. The lesson here is that when we're ready for a fresh start, opportunities tend to present themselves. The same event can either mark a genuine new beginning or merely serve as a detour. The distinction lies in whether the event is "keyed" or "coded" to that transition point, akin to electronic key cards programmed to unlock specific hotel room doors.

Although we often yearn for external signs guiding us toward the future, we must settle for inner signals signaling the proximity of new beginnings. With many transitioning individuals I've coached, this initial hint often manifests as an idea, impression, or image. It's an indescribable experience involving envisioning a scenario or activity and feeling drawn to it. You might already be undergoing this process unconsciously, as it occurs at the fringes of consciousness—somewhat akin to a half-formed daydream.

Genuine beginnings emerge when we align with our deepest desires. I've witnessed people accomplish remarkable feats when genuinely motivated. Take, for instance, a woman—divorced, with three kids, one with disabilities, and lacking a college degree. Despite daunting odds, she aspired to become a secondary school teacher. While the journey seemed daunting, she approached it step by step, eventually earning her degree.

To thrive in a new beginning, it's crucial to understand and overcome what's hindering your progress. Firstly, cease endless preparation and take action when the timing feels right. Next, visualize yourself achieving your goal and begin identifying with that desired outcome. Finally, concentrate on the process rather than fixating solely on the end result. Becoming too fixated on the outcome can lead to unnecessary stress and disappointment. For instance, a client felt disheartened during her job search until she shifted her focus from merely securing a job to enjoying the exploration process.

Now, let's contemplate your desired life change. What area of your life are you seeking to transform, and what obstacles do you perceive standing in your way?

Understanding Transitions

Pick a change that you have recently experienced. Write it down.

Think of a change you want to make. Write it down.

What's your biggest struggle when it comes to change?

In what stage of transition are you in currently?

What are you clearing? What do you need to let go off?

Which habits, attitudes and outlooks are no longer serving you?

Key Take AWAY

3 STAGES OF TRANSITION



Key questions for each stage

Endings

Neutral

New Beginning



Action Steps:

Action Steps:

Action Steps:

Hey! Let's deepen the conversation

I'd like to invite you to take me up on a totally **free 1:1 session with me**. This is for you if you're committed to personal growth AND you want a thinking partner to support and challenge you.

During the session we will assess your biggest challenge and lay out a mini-plan/ map. I'm committed to helping you gain clarity, purpose, and flow.

Head over to my scheduling link and grab a spot (limited spaces).

Visit my website www.anacoaching.com and calendar <https://anacoaching.as.me/> and join me on social media on linkedin and instagram.

INFO@ANACOACHING.COM

LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH

